2;Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

for leisure enables me to follow the suggestion of a friend, and to endeavour to arrange the materials which I collected with so much care and labour.

At a time when the investigation of the origin of uncivilized races is attracting so much attention in England, I trust that the results of my inquiries and observations may not be considered devoid of interest; and, in this hope, I venture to present them, such as they are, to the Ethnological Society.

The following sketch of the Veddahs is the result of personal and often-repeated investigation among the people themselves: it is founded only on direct evidence; I have admitted nothing on hearsay. Indeed, so difficult is it to elicit anything from people in such a state of barbarism, that I have accepted even the most direct testimony with caution and have only adopted it after careful cross-examination had satisfied me of its trustworthiness. I have tested again and again the truth of every statement I have made, sometimes reluctantly abandoning a link here and there which would have made my case more complete, only from a *doubt* of the perfect accuracy of my information.*

The facts I state are, so far as I can judge, beyond dispute, if honest and patient inquiry be of any value. The deductions I draw from them are my own, and must go for what they are worth.

I limit my observations to the wildest tribes, for it is amongst

---

* It may be said that it is a work of mere supererogation, if not presumption, on my part, to attempt to describe the Veddahs, seeing that Sir J. E. Tennent has so recently devoted several chapters of his work on Ceylon to this subject. But, interesting as these chapters are—perhaps the most interesting in the book—they contain little else than a comparison of the habits of the people of the island, as observed by the ancient voyagers in the fourth and fifth centuries, with the traditional but now long-exploded customs of the Veddahs as reported by Knox. The accomplished author throws no new light on the wild tribes of the Veddahs as they are. On the contrary, his account of them is in some important particulars defective, and even inaccurate. He glances casually at those tribes which are in the wildest state, touching with precision none of their peculiarities, and dwells in detail upon those only which, from long association with the Singalese and Tamil races, have lost much of their originality. Of the ancient aborigines he has compiled much that is curious. Of the existing Veddahs he has given us little besides an epitome of former notices.

An account of the aboriginal races of Ceylon, published under the authority of a late colonial secretary of the island, would naturally be accepted and quoted as accurate and authentic. Sir J. E. Tenfient's chapters on the Veddahs, therefore, render it more incumbent on me to lay before the Society the results of my own inquiries. For, though the habits and customs of wild tribes are important aids in determining their origin, a description of them is worse than useless, unless it be made by a person competent of his own knowledge to describe them. I pretend to no competency beyond this.